

**“After God’s Own Heart,” Lesson 7, Leader’s Guide
Humility, 2 Sam 7**

Central theme: A man after God’s own heart is humble

For Starters: Have you ever accepted an award? How did you feel - deserved it, didn't deserve it, flattered?

Look at the Book: 2 Samuel 7

Explain to your group that, throughout the Old and New Testaments, God has given his people a series of promises, known as covenants. These covenants outlined what God had done or would do for his people and what they should do in response. Each covenant promises or guarantees different things than the one before it. One such covenant was made with David.

Ask them to turn in their Bibles to **2 Samuel 7** and have someone read **verses 1-3**.

This episode in David’s life takes place after he had been established as king. His days of struggling for the allegiance of the people of Israel and Judah are long gone. He has their allegiance and their respect, as shown in their songs about him. David has, indeed, accomplished much and completed the occupation of the land that God promised long before to Joshua. So, David is successful, powerful, and popular.

Handout: Do you know someone, maybe at school, who is very successful, popular, and influential? How would you describe that person? How do they act?

So, David looks around at his success and good life and concludes that he has it pretty good. But, then he recognizes that there is a contrast between his good life, in a luxurious palace, and the place of the ark of God, living in a tent. So, what does David decide to do? **(He decides to build a temple for God, a place for the ark to rest.)**

And Nathan, the prophet, tells him to go ahead and do it. But, God has different plans in mind. In fact, in verses, 4-7, God flat out rejects David’s idea! In fact, God doesn’t seem at all interested in what David can do for him. Instead, God promises to do some incredible things for David!

Have someone read **verses 8-16**.

Handout: Make a list of all the things that God promised to David in this covenant. **(I will make your name great, I will provide a place for Israel, I will give you rest from your enemies, the Lord will establish a house for you, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, I will establish his kingdom, your house and your kingdom will endure)**

God makes some pretty incredible promises in this chapter! Many of these promises would be fulfilled only by Jesus, who is often referred to in the New Testament as the Son of David. By making these promises, God puts David squarely in a prominent place, not only in Israel's history, but in the history of all redemption.

(Optional teaching direction: You could take some time to talk about the fact that God is the one who will make David great, emphasizing God's sovereignty and self-sufficiency. God promises to do everything on David's behalf.)

Handout: If God made such incredible promises to you, personally, how would you respond? How do you think it would affect your view of yourself? Of others?

Ask your group to think back to their answer to the opening questions about receiving awards. When someone gives us honor, sometimes, we react with excitement, other times we don't know exactly how to react. Let's look at David's reaction to God's promises.

Have someone read **verses 17-21**.

Handout: Knowing what you do about David's fame and power at this point, does his response in verses 18 and 19 surprise you? Why or why not?

Although David was famous from the perspective of his own people, or even in the nations around him, he recognized that, compared to God, he is nothing. The perspective we get on our own lives when we consider how great and how wonderful God is helps us to remain humble before him and before others.

David's humility wasn't just a false front, or a one-time thing, either. In fact, his wonder at God's goodness and grandeur when compared with mankind's status in the universe prompted him to write Psalm 8.

Have someone read **Psalm 8**.

Handout: This week, I learned that a man after God's own heart is humble.

Our world doesn't encourage humility. In fact, it celebrates the proud and ambitious who refuse to be overlooked and ignored.

Read them the fictional college admission application letter here (<http://saunderslog.com/2005/11/21/hugh-gallagher-man-of-many-talents/>). The author wrote the "letter" as a submission for a contest.

Although it may be tempting from time to time to make ourselves seem like a big deal, when we take the time to consider who God is, it becomes hard to think too much of ourselves.

Do we often compare ourselves (knowledge, skill, compassion, love) to God or are we content to use lesser comparisons? Do we dwell on his character, power and holiness enough to see exactly how we measure up? What is it that makes us think we deserve glory? Are there times in which we have false humility because we know that is the appropriate response? Where can we display true humility - real, practical examples?

Let's close by re-visiting the words of Psalm 8.

Handout: Re-write Psalm 8:3-6 in your own words.

To close, have your group read their paraphrases of Psalm 8 and then pray to God in response, asking him to give them a vision of his goodness and grandeur that will help them remain humble before him.

Optional activities:

- Play this clip from YouTube of the song "It's Hard to Be Humble" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-07_2DWfEmQ&feature=related). You might want to explain to your group ahead of time that the clip is from the old Muppet Show, so the presence of the Muppets isn't more of a distraction than it should be.
- Just before reading Psalm 8, check out some of the most famous examples of resume padding here (<http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2009/09/26/infamous-resume-lies/>). You can talk from there about the temptation to make more of ourselves than we ought.